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PROGRAM The American Security
Council Report

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FULL TEXT

Adm file

return SENATOR THOMAS DODD: "The Department of Defense has in recent weeks made public two items of intelligence which, taken together, have the gravest implications for our national security, and, indeed, for our ability to survive as a nation.

"First of all, it was revealed that the Soviets are much further along in the construction of an anti-missile defense system than previous official estimates had indicated.

"It is reported that anti-missile defenses are various stages of construction around some (20) Soviet cities, and that the Soviets are growing in debt of such defenses across the major approach routes, which American missiles will have to take.

"It is estimated that this system will be operational within the year.

"Second, the Pentagon's new intelligence estimates indicate that the Soviets have been building and installing intercontinental ballistic missiles, most of them in concrete silos, at a much faster rate than had been considered possible a year, or two ago.

"It is now estimated that the Soviets have from 400 to 500 ICBM's against approximately 1,000 for the United States, and that they're moving rapidly toward parity in numbers.

"This becomes all the more serious, because it is generally conceded that the average Soviet ICBM carries a much more powerful

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nuclear warhead than do today's American missiles.

"The American missile force has been looked upon as a deterrent to the possibility of a thermonuclear attack by the Soviet Union.

"Because such an attack would inevitably destroy a large percentage of our missiles before they could get off the ground, it has been considered essential to the United States to maintain a very substantial numerical lead in intercontinental missiles, so that the Kremlin would know that even if they hit us with a sneak attack, we would still have enough missiles left to inflict devastating damage on the Soviet Union.

"But now we are in the danger of losing this numerical advantage.

"No one, not even the Russians, can know for certain just how effective their anti-missile defense system will be against a saturation attack by American missiles equipped with decoys and other penetration aids.

"It has been estimated that an anti-missile defense system, comparable in magnitude to the one now being installed in the Soviet Union, would cost the United States 30 billion dollars, or more.

"And I simply cannot conceive of the Soviet leaders spending this kind of money on erecting a defense system, if they did not have substantial evidence that this system would effectively cope with an American nuclear counterattack, or at least limit the damage done by it."